



# ESCC NEWS LETTER



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*The mission of ESCC Foundation is to make a positive difference in the lives of all Eastern Shore citizens by helping to provide the best possible learning and teaching environment.*



*Remembering  
 Celebrating  
 Growing*



## 50 Years of Service: Update from President Jim Shaeffer



*Dr. Shaeffer and "Harry", 50th Anniversary mascot*

Your Eastern Shore Community College celebrates fifty years of service to the Eastern Shore providing classes, job training, certifications and degrees from our Melfa campus. ESCC has come a long way from its start at the U.S. Navy Base near Wallops Island as part of the Eastern Shore Branch of the School of Continuing Studies of the University of Virginia in 1964.

A new era began July 1, 1971 when the branch campus of the University of Virginia became Eastern Shore Community College and joined the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). The first graduating class of ESCC in 1972 included seven students.

In July 1972, ground breaking for the new academic building occurred in Melfa, where the college could best serve the educational needs of both Northampton and Accomack counties. The building was dedicated in October 1974.

Driving by campus today, you see our new \$22 million dollar building that opened in 2020 with high tech labs and state of the art classrooms that make ESCC the preeminent educational facility on the Eastern Shore. In addition to our new building, we continue to expand programming developed in partnership with community businesses and based on the future needs of our workforce.

Launching July 1, 2021 is G3, a training and education program for any Virginia resident whose family income falls below an identified threshold. This program will assist students in designated programs of study leading to jobs in high-demand fields in Healthcare, Information Technology, Manufacturing, and Skilled Trades, Early Childhood Education, and Public Safety. Support for these careers is timely as we begin to move forward from the pandemic, and G3 is designed to fit around the busy schedules of our working students. ESCC Foundation scholarships will continue to cover gap funding and provide critical support to help our students complete.

As we celebrate 50 years of service, we're excited to honor the accomplishments and successes that paved the way for today's Eastern Shore Community College and that help us change lives. Please look for announcements on our website and follow us on social media to celebrate Your Eastern Shore Community College.

*Visit [es.vccs.edu/50years/](https://es.vccs.edu/50years/) for updates and to connect with alumni.*



## Mapping Aspirations to Careers by Dr. Patrick Tompkins



As a recent transplant to the Shore, I often use GPS apps like Waze, which is great...until I hit a no cell signal zone. One time I followed the app to a dead end on the west side of the airport when I needed to get to the east side of the airport.

Going to college for the first time can be a little like that. Our students very often arrive with an aspiration, but they only have a vague sense of the map. Our goal is to match their interests, abilities, and goals with our programs and with careers.

We have revised all college transfer programs to reduce time-to-completion and clarify paths to four-year schools. In workforce, we're launching new programs that expand credentials and on-ramps to work.

- Construction Trades
- Dental Assisting
- Fundamentals of Healthcare
- Google IT Support
- Law Enforcement
- Unmanned Systems
- Webpage Development
- Workplace Office Professional



In addition, we have aligned 43 of our programs with the statewide G3 initiative which provides funding to students.

We partnered with the chambers of commerce and the planning district commission to host four business roundtables. What we learned from those points the way for new programs in areas like customer service, hospitality, bookkeeping, entrepreneurship, small engine repair, and internships.



We are strengthening the quality and expanding the number of high school dual enrollment programs and courses with new certifications in automotive, welding, and EMT.

In adult education, we integrate education and training so participants earn a high school equivalency diploma and a workforce credential. We also partnered with the Eastern Shore Regional Jail, Community Services Board, and local ministries on a re-entry program for women and men.

Your Eastern Shore Community College is focused on two things—first, continue to develop educational programs needed by ESCC employers and desired by students, and second, increase student success, retention, and completion. As we say at ESCC, that's a YES!

## Electronics Students Intern at Wallops

This past November, Eastern Shore Community College Electronics students Chris Del-Rossi and James Johnson were afforded a unique learning experience with Sentinel Robotic Solutions (SRS) at Wallops Island. As interns they helped network video, voice and data from a ship 90 miles away to a land-based Navy Operations Center.



James Johnson

“As someone with a passion for all things technical, I jumped at the opportunity to join an internship,” Del Rossi said. He went on to explain, “Using a series of GPS tracked radio relays and an autonomous tracking focused beam base station, the system can provide full voice, video, and data communications for a fraction of the cost and complexity of a satellite system.”

Like Del Rossi, James Johnson immediately saw the value of an opportunity like this working against the backdrop of Wallops Island and alongside the knowledgeable team at SRS.

“Being exposed to how a project like this works will be so helpful moving forward in our careers.”

Peter Bale, CEO of SRS, stated, “We are pleased to continue and expand our relationship with ESCC and the great talent consistently being produced here on the Shore. Both Chris Del Rossi and James Johnson were outstanding additions to the team. Bale added, “We are proud to be part of the “YES” at Eastern Shore Community College.

## YES! Eastern Shore, We Are Your Community College

It was a little over a year ago, in January 2020, when Your Eastern Shore Community College launched its YES! brand as we opened the new academic building.

YES! stands for Your Eastern Shore. We call it our culture of hospitality and accountability. As an internal brand, by YES! we signify that ESCC belongs to each student and staff member. As an external brand, we signify that Your Eastern Shore Community College belongs to all residents of the Shore.



Professor Chevelle Mason invited the community to record their YES! at the 2020 Heritage Festival.

We invited our students and the community to define their personal “YES!” The responses were as varied as blades of marsh grass, yet they combine into a swath of beauty, health, and hope: YES! is “A Safe Place,” “A Second Chance,” “My Home,” and “My Opportunity.”

In this land of remote work, of social distance and Zoom that gives the illusion of closing distance, YES! brings our college family together around shared affirmation, commitment, and care. Nearly every day at ESCC someone on our team will call out YES! in a meeting or an email...celebrating completers of the Hair Braiding and Weaving program, helping a student leave an abusive relationship, hosting Registration Rallies, awarding scholarships, sharing kindnesses...what is your YES!?

## One Door: From Contact to Completion

As part of ESCC's reboot plan, in July 2019 ESCC implemented solutions to become a model community college serving a sparsely populated rural area.

The One Door initiative was launched in March 2021 to provide complete wrap-around student support to all learners. Each student is met at the door when they enter and immediately connected to a coach who follows them from connection to career.



Key aspects of the One Door initiatives will:

- Connect learners with services and opportunities at ESCC and in the community, such as tutoring, internships, the food bank, housing and employment.
- Develop a career services and workplace learning program that integrates all ESCC programs.
- Enhance student engagement by establishing new mentoring or affinity groups

The One Door program will have a positive impact on the lives of all ESCC learners. It will eliminate student barriers by streamlining and unifying all programs and services.

## CDL Student Overcomes Major Bumps in the Road



Voncilita "Vonnie" Joseph developed an early interest in big trucks that were a fixture in her Painter neighborhood. When Vonnie's cousin Derek Hill completed his Commercial Driver's License (CDL) certification through Eastern Shore Community College, Vonnie decided to enter the CDL Program at ESCC.

Just as things were moving forward, life intervened. Vonnie was innocently caught in crossfire of a shooting that resulted in three gunshot wounds. In the blink of an eye she was in Sentara Norfolk General Hospital with severe injuries. After multiple surgeries, recovery was slow. Vonnie adopted a mantra of "keep your eyes on the prize," and remained determined to obtain her CDL certification.

The remote learning due to COVID-19 worked in Vonnie's favor as she healed physically and played catch-up with course curriculum. With the support of ESCC Fast Forward Career Coach Barb Rang and CDS Coordinator K.C. Parks, soon she was back on the driving range.

In courageous fashion, and in pursuit of that big roaring rig that she had set her sights on, Vonnie Joseph graduated with her CDL certification in October 2020 at ESCC. She is currently working as a driver with a prominent trucking service.

While no one could anticipate the incredible hurdles she endured, Vonnie acknowledges that the support she received at ESCC provides motivation to anyone embarking on their educational journey...Eastern Shore Community College is here for students, in good times, and bad.

## The Honorable Robert S. Bloxom, Sr. (1937-2020)



ESCC Foundation mourns the loss of longtime supporter, the Honorable Robert S. Bloxom, Sr., for his service to Eastern Shore Community College and ESCC Foundation. Part of a band of Eastern Shore residents who got the college off the ground in 1971, Mr. Bloxom guided and encouraged ESCC's growth. In the late 1990's he helped create ESCC Foundation to bring together resources needed for the College to provide educational opportunity. He also helped to found Project Horizons which encourages at-risk youth to complete high school by offering them free tuition to ESCC upon graduation. (See below)

Several years ago Mr. Bloxom and his wife Pat established a trust with the twin goals of providing income during their retirement, and afterwards, a gift to the Foundation. In addition to providing retirement income, this charitable remainder trust will perpetuate the work of Project Horizons.

We thank Bob and Pat for their support of the college and Foundation and for their vision for creating a pathway to higher education on the Eastern Shore.

## Project Horizons Provides a Pathway to ESCC

Project Horizons is a college-track scholarship and mentoring program operated by ESCC Foundation and started under the leadership of the late Robert S. Bloxom, Sr. The program provides academic, social, and cultural support for economically disadvantaged students, and it introduces them to post-secondary education, as well as provides free college tuition.



Guidance counselors in local public schools identify students who have the potential for academic success but who also have significant barriers: financial, cultural, emotional, or any combination. Students are required to write a short essay to apply. Project Horizons encourages at-risk youth to complete high school and provides a direct pathway to Eastern Shore Community College where free tuition is guaranteed.

Under the leadership of Project Horizons Coordinator Floriselda Roblero (pictured above right), the program serves students in grades 7-12 and provides free tutoring services, academic incentives, and immediate access to in-school counselors. A graduate of the program herself, Ms. Roblero maintains monthly contact with students, and during a normal year provides educational and cultural field trips such as visits to college campuses, Barrier Islands Center, ice skating in Norfolk, and the occasional pizza party.

ESCC Project Horizons graduates include those working as: a registered nurse, a Northampton High School counselor, and a lawyer. ESCC's Kentrelle Walker (pictured above left), a case worker at ESCC for the federally funded Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program, rose through the Project Horizons program.

The program is funded by annual contributions, a small endowment, and a grant from ESAAA/Project Discovery. Over the past ten years, 100% of Project Horizons students graduated from high school. Well over 90% of these students pursue post-secondary education with the remainder entering the military or workforce.

## Taylor Bank Joins in Celebrating 50 Years of ESCC

ESCC Foundation is pleased to announce that Taylor Bank is Lead Sponsor of ESCC's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Taylor Bank President and CEO, Ray Thompson explains:

*"Taylor Bank is delighted to be part of the Eastern Shore of Virginia business community, and proud to support Eastern Shore Community College. For five decades, ESCC has provided education, training, and programs for thousands of residents and businesses and has positioned itself as a valuable community resource. We look forward to partnering with ESCC in financial literacy programs and other needs in the years ahead."*



Please join us on campus for the following events to celebrate ESCC's 50th:

### Homecoming Friday, October 22, 2021 11:30am-2:30pm

We'll welcome alumni, students, friends, and the community to celebrate ESCC's 50th with lunch, special recognition for alumni, free giveaways, and campus tours. We'll also have an official ribbon cutting of our new academic building completed in 2020. The event is free and open to the public.

### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Oyster Roast Friday, January 28, 2022 5-9pm

This will be our third in a series of "Eastern Shore" style oyster roasts with live music, a variety of food and drink, and the opportunity to support our many scholarship efforts.



Please visit [www.es.vccs.edu/50years/#events](http://www.es.vccs.edu/50years/#events) for photos, videos and memories about ESCC throughout the years. We hope you'll share your story about what ESCC means to you.

## You Can Make a Difference

ESCC helps make dreams come true. A gift to our Eastern Shore Fund supports scholarships and services that improve the educational experience for every student. We invite you to show your support by giving online at [es.vccs.edu](http://es.vccs.edu) or in the attached envelope, to help all students access the great programs we offer.

## Leave a Legacy for Future ESCC Students

The ESCC Legacy Society encourages all who support the College's mission to use their financial and estate planning to help the College maintain the affordable access and educational excellence that help our students succeed. When you include Eastern Shore Community College Foundation in your long-term planning, you are making a difference for generations to come.

If you have included Eastern Shore Community College Foundation in your estate planning, or would like information on how to do so, please contact Patty Kellam at (757)789-1749 or [pkellam@es.vccs.edu](mailto:pkellam@es.vccs.edu). Information is also posted online at [es.vccs.edu/about/escc-foundation/](http://es.vccs.edu/about/escc-foundation/).



Our free Healthy Snacks program addresses food insecurity and is just one of the many services ESCC Foundation provides to students.



## Eastern Shore Community College Celebrates 50 Years with Special Events and Recollections

Details inside and on our website at [es.vccs.edu/50years/](http://es.vccs.edu/50years/)

